

# The Midwife.

## A TEXT-BOOK FOR MIDWIVES.

Midwives and teachers of midwifery in the London area, where the writer is so well known, have for some time eagerly anticipated the appearance of the comprehensive "Text-book for Midwives" promised by Dr. John S. Fairbairn, M.A., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., obstetric physician in charge of maternity wards at St. Thomas's Hospital, and physician and lecturer to Midwives at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, S.E., and it is hoped that the unavoidable delay in its appearance, owing to trade disturbance, will not be of long duration, as the examinations of the Central Midwives Board are at hand, and it is designed to be a great help to those studying for its Certificate. In the advance proof of the Preface the author says:—

"For adding another to the many text-books from which the midwife can make her choice I can plead two excuses. First, that this one has certain characteristics of its own, and second, that what special features it may possess represent an experience of the needs and aspirations of midwives acquired by over twelve years' association with them, as teacher, examiner, post-graduate lecturer, and medical colleague. This text-book contains more than has hitherto been considered necessary for midwives, and is open to the criticism of going beyond what is required by them and of them. On this score, however, those who know the more advanced school of practising midwives will make no demur. That school is possessed with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and is rarely content with what has hitherto been given it in books written solely for midwives. Formal medical works are in constant use, and my hope is that the scope of this book has been made wide enough to render the purchase of such unnecessary.

"The Introduction on Physiology and Bacteriology, the space devoted to obstetric complications and the operative procedures in connection with them have been included partly with this idea.

"There is, however, another and a better justification for a comprehensive book. A more educated class is now coming forward to qualify as midwives, and for some time past there have been discussions as to the advisability of raising the standard of training and examination. Only the fear of the increased expense and diminished supply, involved by the necessary lengthening of the period of study, has delayed the adoption of this reform, which, sooner or later, is bound to come. This book is my contribution towards meeting the legitimate aspirations of the midwife for a higher professional education.

"The first difficulty which the teacher who aims at progress in this direction has to face is the want of knowledge of the elementary principles of physiology among many of his pupils. It is

chiefly to meet this that the Introductory Sections have been included. Even if not studied thoroughly, they are available for reference. But without some effort to obtain a knowledge of the bed-rock principles on which all medical science is founded, little advance will be made by the midwife. For the teacher's second and greater difficulty is the lack of that mental drill and training in scientific method which the study of the preliminary sciences is designed to give the medical student before he begins his professional work. I have endeavoured to make the theoretical portions of this book as educative as possible, so that they might act in some slight degree as an equivalent to the pupil-midwife of the early studies of the medical curriculum. By frequent insistence on the pupil's working with the pelvis, the skull, prepared specimens and models, and by reference to points she may see for herself in the lying-in room and elsewhere, an effort has been made to train her in observation and deduction. The illustrations of actual specimens, several of them in regular use for the instruction of midwives at the General Lying-in Hospital, have been inserted with the same object. Throughout, my endeavour has been to make the pupil reason out things for herself and not merely to learn like a parrot. With this end in view, I have preferred to quote in the text the rules of the C.M.B. wherever they apply, and when necessary to explain their rationale, rather than to adopt the usual custom of reprinting them *en bloc* at the end of the book."

The whole work is evidently conceived in a spirit of sympathy with midwives and their aspirations.

## AID FOR THE BELGIAN MOTHERS.

We learn that, due to the private enterprise of some ladies, a Lying-in hospital may be opened for Belgian ladies who have had temporarily to leave their native country. The idea is to take these ladies at a very small fee and in some cases for nothing, just to cover expenses. The nursing will, we understand, be entirely voluntary. We hope this much needed assistance for these ladies may be forthcoming, and that many a bonny little Belgian boy may thus be brought into the world under conditions as happy as may be under the distressing circumstances, to serve their country in their turn as nobly and bravely as their fathers are doing now.

## MATERNITY HELP.

For many years the Jewish Maternity District Nursing and Sick Room Helpers Society has employed some 90 sick-room helps, who attend at the patients' house from eight to eight, prepare breakfast, send the children to school, and help generally in the house under a trained nurse. We observe that it is proposed by the Women's Employment Committee to encourage such workers at maternity centres.

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